



# NOTES FROM THE:

## Air Force Accounting and Finance Office

by Colonel Martha M. Beatty

### A Week of Accounting and Finance Conferences

The Air Force Accounting and Finance Office (AFAFO) hosted three significant conferences between 12-16 April 1999. Over 250 SAF/FM, MAJCOM, Financial Services Office, and DFAS-DE military members and civilian employees participated in this week-long event.

The week started with a joint council session of the AFAFO, SAF/FMPC, and the MAJCOM FMFs representing Mr Hale and the Air Force, and the major Directors of the Denver Center (DFAS-DE) and the Operating Location (OPLOC) Directors representing Mr Turner. Collectively, the 36 participants discussed and reviewed significant topics and issues impacting the accounting and finance network. These joint sessions have been an annual event between the Air Force and DFAS-DE since the start of the DFAS consolidation. The major topics discussed included the ability of the MAJCOMs to get involved earlier in clearing Negative Unliquidated Obligations, metrics to measure how well vendors are doing in providing correct and complete documentation to the financial management community, expansion of the use of the receiving report module of the Automated Business Service System (ABSS), and the need to keep the MAJCOMs better informed. Emphasis was placed on the discussion of the tri-annual review as it has a direct impact on achieving a clean audit opinion. Conducting this review requires a team effort by the OPLOCs, FSOs, Contracting Offices, and Resource Advisors. The AFAFO is continuing to work with DFAS-DE/A and the MAJCOM/FMFs to find a way to clean up the database and ease the process of conducting the reviews in the future. By the time you read this, additional discussion will have taken place at the FM Executive Session and additional guidance will have reached the MAJCOMs.

The first Air Force Financial Services Office (FSO) Worldwide Conference since the DFAS capitalized the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center (AFAFC) in 1991 was convened on 13 April 1999. This milestone event drew together key members of Financial Services Office staffs from throughout our global network into a three-day conference.

“Information and Education to Improve the Financial Network” was the conference theme. Mr Hale presented the keynote address for the opening session. He

also presented an “Outlook for Financial Management” during lunch, which was hosted by the Mile High Chapter of the American Society of Military Comptrollers.

Other key presentations made during the conference included a Senior Leaders Perspective given by Col Beatty, AFAFO, and a session on Enlisted Issues given by Chief Tanner, SAF/FM. Lt Col Fagan, SAF/FMBOT, opened the 14 April general session with a recap status of the Defense Travel System. Col Pesola, SAF/FMP, opened the 15 April general session with an overview of the Guidelines for Professional Development of Air Force Financial Managers. Luncheon topics included Mission Support Officer Assignments and Expeditionary Aerospace Forces.

Discussions were interesting and candid regarding the many issues confronting base level organizations. Issues ranging from FSO training, responsibilities, and leadership and management roles to military pay, travel and tri-annual review were presented in workshops over the three-day conference. The opportunity for FSOs to share their ideas and concerns with their peers was valuable; the FSOs found they are not alone in addressing the many challenges they confront daily. For those who could not attend, briefing slides are available until 15 August at the AFAFO web site.

A total of 21.6 hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) could have been earned by attending all portions of the AF FSO WW conference. Based on the conference critiques, most topics were scored excellent or outstanding by 60 percent or more of the attendees. The range was 60 to 86.4 percent. Nearly 94 percent (93.9%) gave an overall conference rating of either outstanding or excellent.

However, the success of any conference can not be measured by the number of CPE hours or critique ratings, but rather by what each attendee individually and collectively experienced. The learning opportunity of briefings, presentations, breakout sessions, and demonstrations as well as the amount of individual crossfeed, sharing, and interaction seen throughout the conference lends even the casual observer to determine this conference was a responding success.

The last day of the week was reserved for the MAJCOMs to hold individual “Command Day” sessions. Seven MAJCOMs took advantage of the opportunity.